MARVEL
DOCTOR
STRANGE
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THE DARKHOLD, GENTLEMEN! DO NOT BE FOOLED BY ITS APPEARANCE! IT IS MUCH MORE THAN A MERE BOOK!
THE WORDS HEREIN WERE INSCRIBED BY THE ARCH-DEMON CATHON, EONS BEFORE MAN WALKED THE EARTH. ITS PAGES ARE NIGH UNTO INDESTRUCTIBLE, AND IT HARBORS AN EVIL POWER UNDREAMED OF!
MERELY TO TOUCH IT CAN INVITE DANGER, BUT TOUCH IT I MUST--
--IF OUR MISSION IS TO SUCCEED! YES, EVEN AT THE RISK OF MY VERY SOUL!
THE CAPED MAN SPEAKS FROM AUTHORITY, FOR HE IS DOCTOR STRANGE THE GREATEST LIVING SORCERER OF OUR TIME.
AT THE SOUND OF HIS WARNING, THE FOUR MEN WITH HIM GROW SILENT...
...WONG, THE EVER-FAITHFUL MANSERVANT...
... BLADE, SELF-STYLED VAMPIRE-SLAYER...
...FRANK DRAKE, LAST MORTAL DESCENDANT OF THE CREATURE THEY HAVE ALL PURSUED...
...AND HANNIBAL KING, PRIVATE DETECTIVE AND MOST RELUCTANT VAMPIRE.

THEY HAVE ALL JOURNEYED HERE TO CASTLE MORDO, IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN ALPS, TO SEEK OUT THE UNHOLY BOOK AND EMPLOY IT IN A LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO SAVE AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD FROM THE CURSE OF THE UNLIVING!
IF THEY FAIL THIS NIGHT, HUMANITY IS DOOMED!

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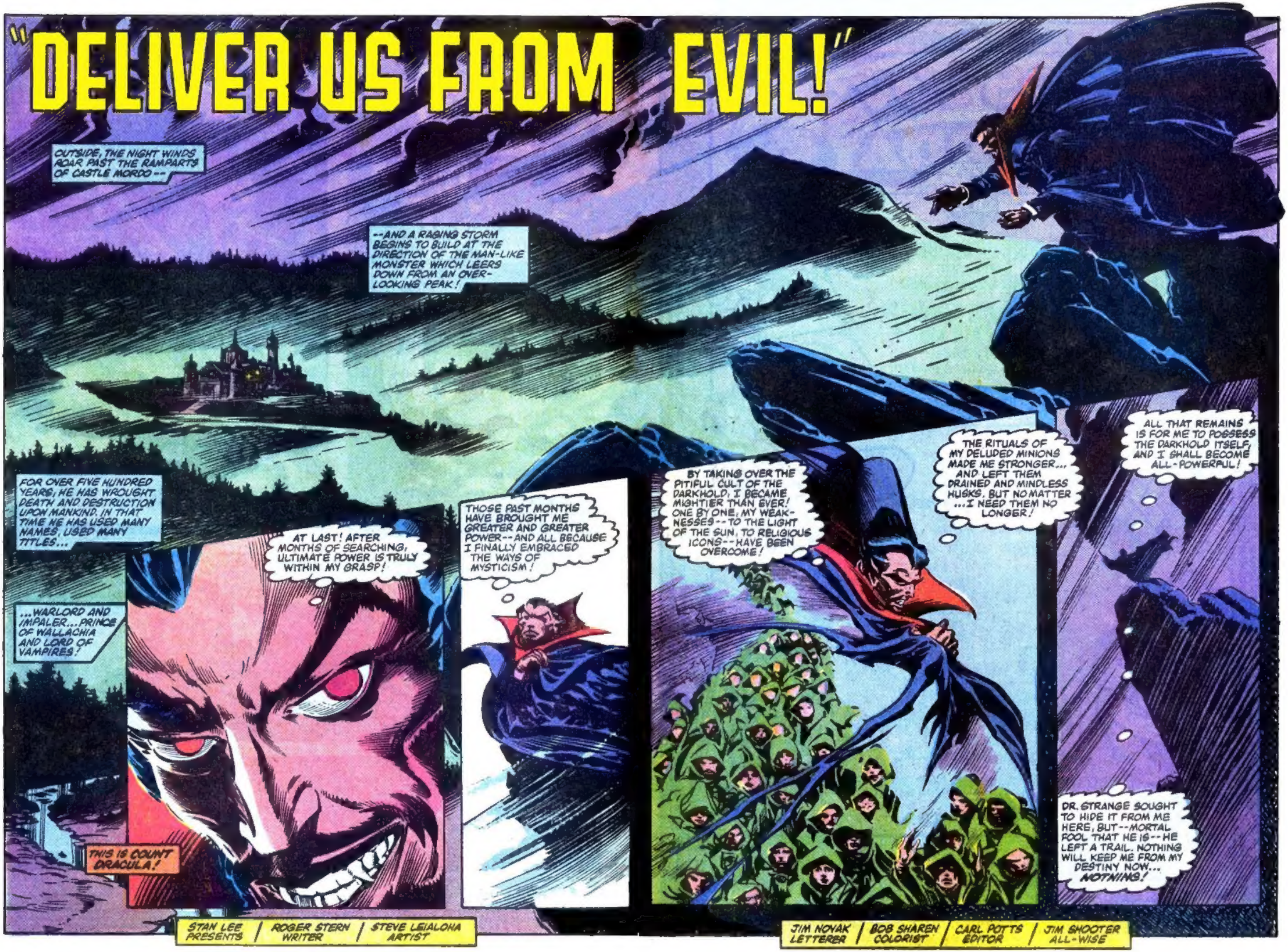
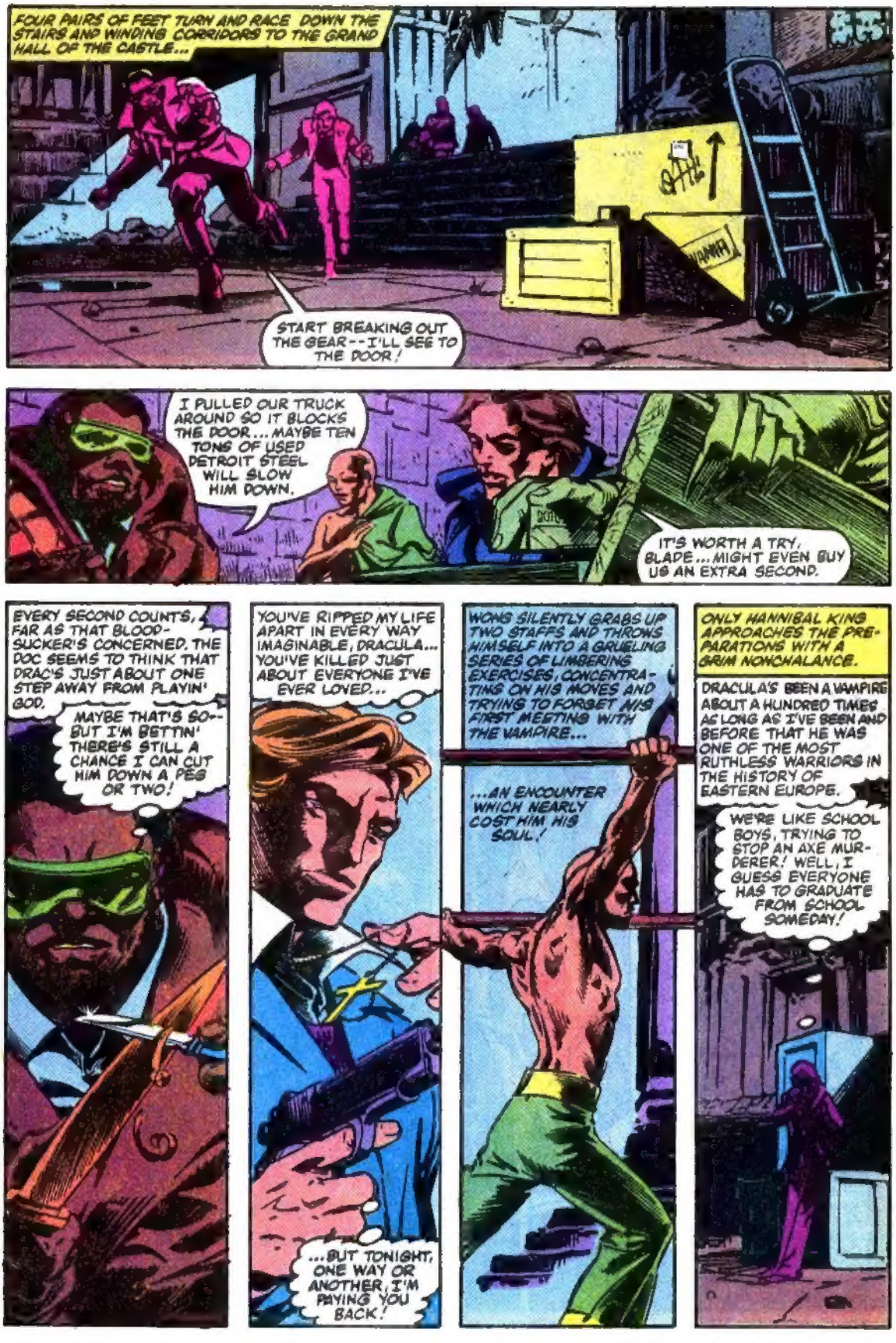
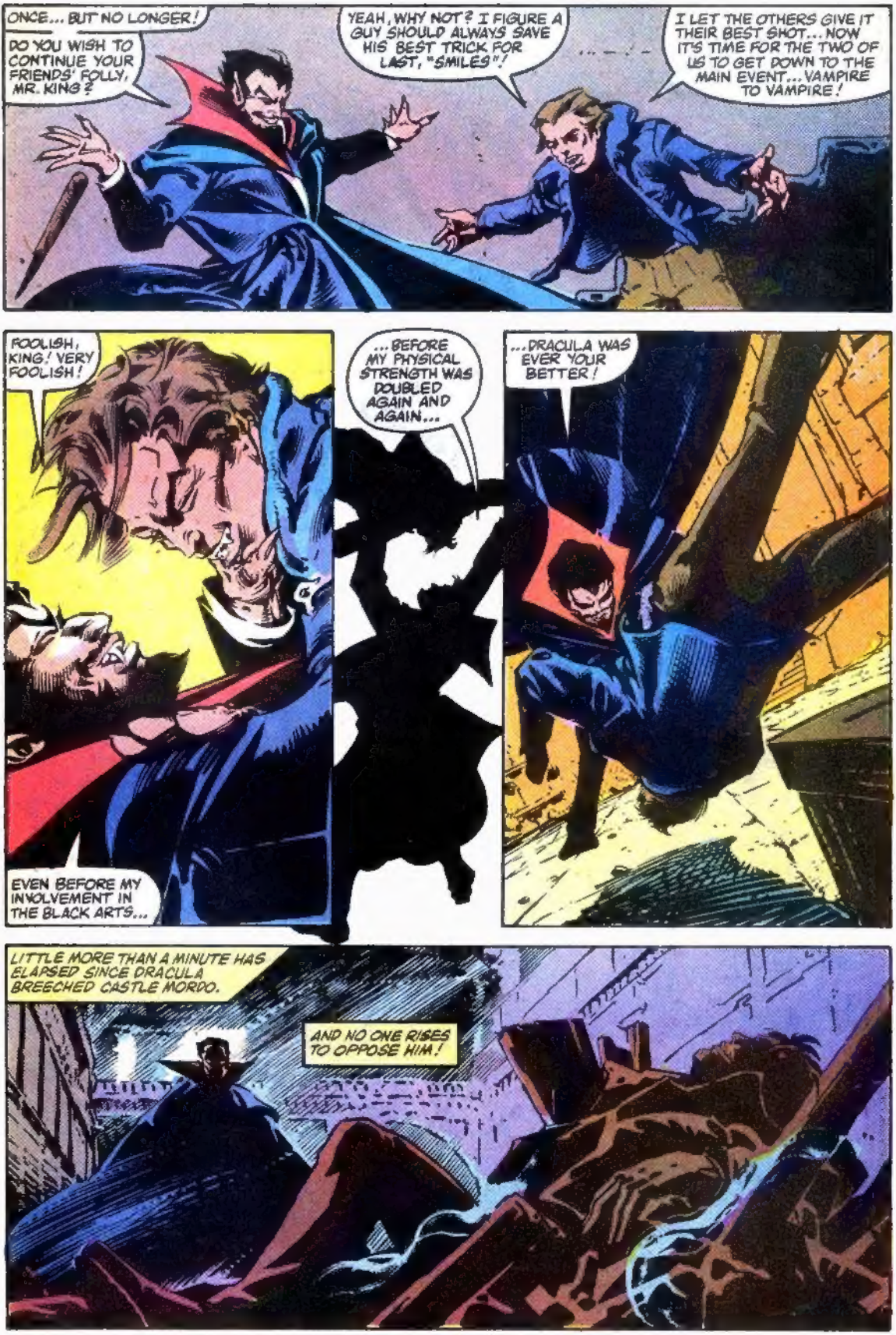

"DELIVER US FROM EVIL!"
OUTSIDE, THE NIGHT WINDS ROAR PAST THE RAMPARTS OF CASTLE MORDO--
--AND A RAGING STORM BEGINS TO BUILD AT THE DIRECTION OF THE MAN-LIKE MONSTER WHICH LEERS DOWN FROM AN OVER-LOOKING PEAK!
FOR OVER FIVE HUNDRED YEARS, HE HAS WROUGHT DEATH AND DESTRUCTION UPON MANKIND. IN THAT TIME HE HAS USED MANY NAMES, USED MANY TITLES...
...WARLORD AND IMPALER... PRINCE OF WALLACHIA AND LORD OF VAMPIRES!
THIS IS COUNT DRACULA!
AT LAST! AFTER MONTHS OF SEARCHING, ULTIMATE POWER IS TRULY WITHIN MY GRASP!
THOSE PAST MONTHS HAVE BROUGHT ME GREATER AND GREATER POWER--AND ALL BECAUSE I FINALLY EMBRACED THE WAYS OF MYSTICISM!
BY TAKING OVER THE PITIFUL CULT OF THE DARKHOLD, I BECAME MIGHTIER THAN EVER! ONE BY ONE, MY WEAK-NESSES--TO THE LIGHT OF THE SUN, TO RELIGIOUS ICONS--HAVE BEEN OVERCOME!
THE RITUALS OF MY DELUDED MINIONS MADE ME STRONGER... AND LEFT THEM DRAINED AND MINDLESS HUSKS. BUT NO MATTER ...I NEED THEM NO LONGER!
ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO POSSESS THE DARKHOLD ITSELF, AND I SHALL BECOME ALL-POWERFUL!
DR. STRANGE SOUGHT TO HIDE IT FROM ME HERE, BUT--MORTAL FOOL THAT HE IS--HE LEFT A TRAIL. NOTHING WILL KEEP ME FROM MY DESTINY NOW... NOTHING!
STAN LEE PRESENTS / ROGER STERN WRITER / STEVE LEIALOHA ARTIST
JIM NOVAK LETTERER / BOB SHAREN COLORIST / CARL POTTS EDITOR / JIM SHOOTER ALL-WISE

STEPPING OUT INTO SPACE--
--HE TAKES ON THE FORM OF A MONSTROUS BAT... LEATHERN WINGS BEARING HIM ON THROUGH THE STORM TO THE FAR CASTLE.
AND WITHIN THAT STONE FORTRESS...
I SENSE A DISTURBANCE... LIKE UNTO ONE I HAVE FELT BEFORE.
THE TAINT OF EVIL IS UNMISTAKABLE. IT CAN ONLY BE DRACULA!
WE MUST HURRY WITH THE FINAL PREPARATIONS!
WITH A THOUGHT AND A GESTURE, THE SORCERER SENDS HIS MYSTIC PROBE THROUGHOUT THE CASTLE OF HIS DEPARTED FOEMAN, BARON MORDO.
IN AN INSTANT, IT STREAKS THROUGH EVERY HALL OF THE GREAT OLD CASTLE, CHECKING EVERY OCCULT DEFENSE--
--ACTIVATING THE MYSTICAL SEAL OF EVERY WINDOW...
--EVERY CHIMNEY, EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS OF ACCESS TO THE FORTRESS--
--BEFORE RETURNING TO ITS MASTER.
WHAT'S THE VERDICT, DOC?
THE CASTLE IS EFFECTIVELY SEALED, DRAKE. THERE IS ONLY ONE ENTRANCE LEFT OPEN TO DRACULA.
YOU MUST GUARD THAT POSITION AND DELAY HIM THERE... UNTIL THE RITUAL I HAVE DISCOVERED CAN BE READIED!


FOUR PAIRS OF FEET TURN AND RACE DOWN THE STAIRS AND WINDING CORRIDORS TO THE GRAND HALL OF THE CASTLE...
START BREAKING OUT THE GEAR--I'LL SEE TO THE DOOR!
I PULLED OUR TRUCK AROUND SO IT BLOCKS THE DOOR... MAYBE TEN TONS OF USED DETROIT STEEL WILL SLOW HIM DOWN.
IT'S WORTH A TRY, BLADE... MIGHT EVEN BUY US AN EXTRA SECOND.
EVERY SECOND COUNTS, FAR AS THAT BLOOD-SUCKER'S CONCERNED. THE DOC SEEMS TO THINK THAT DRAC'S JUST ABOUT ONE STEP AWAY FROM PLAYIN' GOD.
MAYBE THAT'S SO--BUT I'M BETTIN' THERE'S STILL A CHANCE I CAN CUT HIM DOWN A PEG OR TWO!
YOU'VE RIPPED MY LIFE APART IN EVERY WAY IMAGINABLE, DRACULA... YOU'VE KILLED JUST ABOUT EVERYONE I'VE EVER LOVED...
...BUT TONIGHT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I'M PAYING YOU BACK!
WONG SILENTLY GRABS UP TWO STAFFS AND THROWS HIMSELF INTO A GRUELING SERIES OF LIMBERING EXERCISES, CONCENTRATING ON HIS MOVES AND TRYING TO FORGET HIS FIRST MEETING WITH THE VAMPIRE...
...AN ENCOUNTER WHICH NEARLY COST HIM HIS SOUL!
ONLY HANNIBAL KING APPROACHES THE PREPARATIONS WITH A GRIM NONCHALANCE.
DRACULA'S BEEN A VAMPIRE ABOUT A HUNDRED TIMES AS LONG AS I'VE BEEN AND BEFORE THAT HE WAS ONE OF THE MOST RUTHLESS WARRIORS IN THE HISTORY OF EASTERN EUROPE.
WE'RE LIKE SCHOOL BOYS, TRYING TO STOP AN AXE MURDERER! WELL, I GUESS EVERYONE HAS TO GRADUATE FROM SCHOOL SOMEDAY!

IT HAPPENS ALL TOO SUDDENLY!
THE FOG-LIKE MIST POURS INTO THE CHAMBER, OOZING AROUND THE CRACKS IN THE GREAT DOOR AND TAKING ON THE FORM OF A MAN...
...OR SOMETHING THAT HAD ONCE BEEN A MAN!
DRACULA!
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT, ANCESTOR! THIS TIME I'M PUTTING YOU TO REST FOR GOOD!
KBLAM
BLAM
DON'T BE ABSURD! THOSE SILVER-PLATED BULLETS CAUSE ME NO MORE HARM THAN LEADEN ONES!
UNGH!
WHO SHALL BE NEXT? AH, BLADE! STILL PARADING AROUND WITH THOSE LUDICROUS WOODEN KNIVES?
LAUGH ALL YA WANT, FANGS! SHARPENED TEAK CUTS JUST AS GOOD AS STEEL!
THAT IT DOES, FOOL! BUT SUCH CUTS AS YOU CAN INFLICT MEAN NOTHING TO ME! I AM BEYOND MORTAL PAIN!
ARE YOU BEYOND SUCH PAIN, BLADE?
GGGNNGH!

WHAT THE DEVIL? I COULD'VE SWORN BLADE STUCK HIM RIGHT IN THE HEART, BUT HE DIDN'T EVEN FLINCH!
EVEN AS BLADE IS FLUNG THE LENGTH OF THE HALL, WONG SPRINGS INTO ACTION!
THE ONLY SOUND COMES FROM THE EVEN RUSH OF HIS BREATH AND THE WHIRL OF HIS BO-STICK.
I SAW TRICKS SUCH AS THESE YEARS AGO IN THE ORIENT. THEY IMPRESS ME NO MORE NOW THAN THEY DID THEN!
KRAK
IN ONE FLUID MOTION WONG LANDS, TURNS, AND THRUSTS WITH THE SPLINTERED SHAFT--
--RAMMING IT DIRECTLY THROUGH THE CREATURE'S HEART!
BUT--
PERHAPS I UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU. ONCE, SUCH A WOUND WOULD HAVE LEFT ME HELPLESS!
WHAP


ONCE... BUT NO LONGER!
DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE YOUR FRIENDS' FOLLY, MR. KING?
YEAH, WHY NOT? I FIGURE A GUY SHOULD ALWAYS SAVE HIS BEST TRICK FOR LAST, "SMILES"!
I LET THE OTHERS GIVE IT THEIR BEST SHOT... NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE TWO OF US TO GET DOWN TO THE MAIN EVENT... VAMPIRE TO VAMPIRE!
FOOLISH, KING! VERY FOOLISH!
EVEN BEFORE MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE BLACK ARTS...
...BEFORE MY PHYSICAL STRENGTH WAS DOUBLED AGAIN AND AGAIN...
...DRACULA WAS EVER YOUR BETTER!
LITTLE MORE THAN A MINUTE HAS ELAPSED SINCE DRACULA BREECHED CASTLE MORDO.
AND NO ONE RISES TO OPPOSE HIM!

MY DESTINY CALLS TO ME. I'LL COME BACK LATER TO FINISH THESE FOUR FOR GOOD.
FAREWELL, GENTLEMEN! HISTORY WILL NO DOUBT FORGET YOUR LAST FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ME FROM ACHIEVING MY DESTINY!
BUT REST ASSURED THAT I SHALL REMEMBER! AND WHEN I REMEMBER, I SHALL LAUGH!
HA HA HA HA

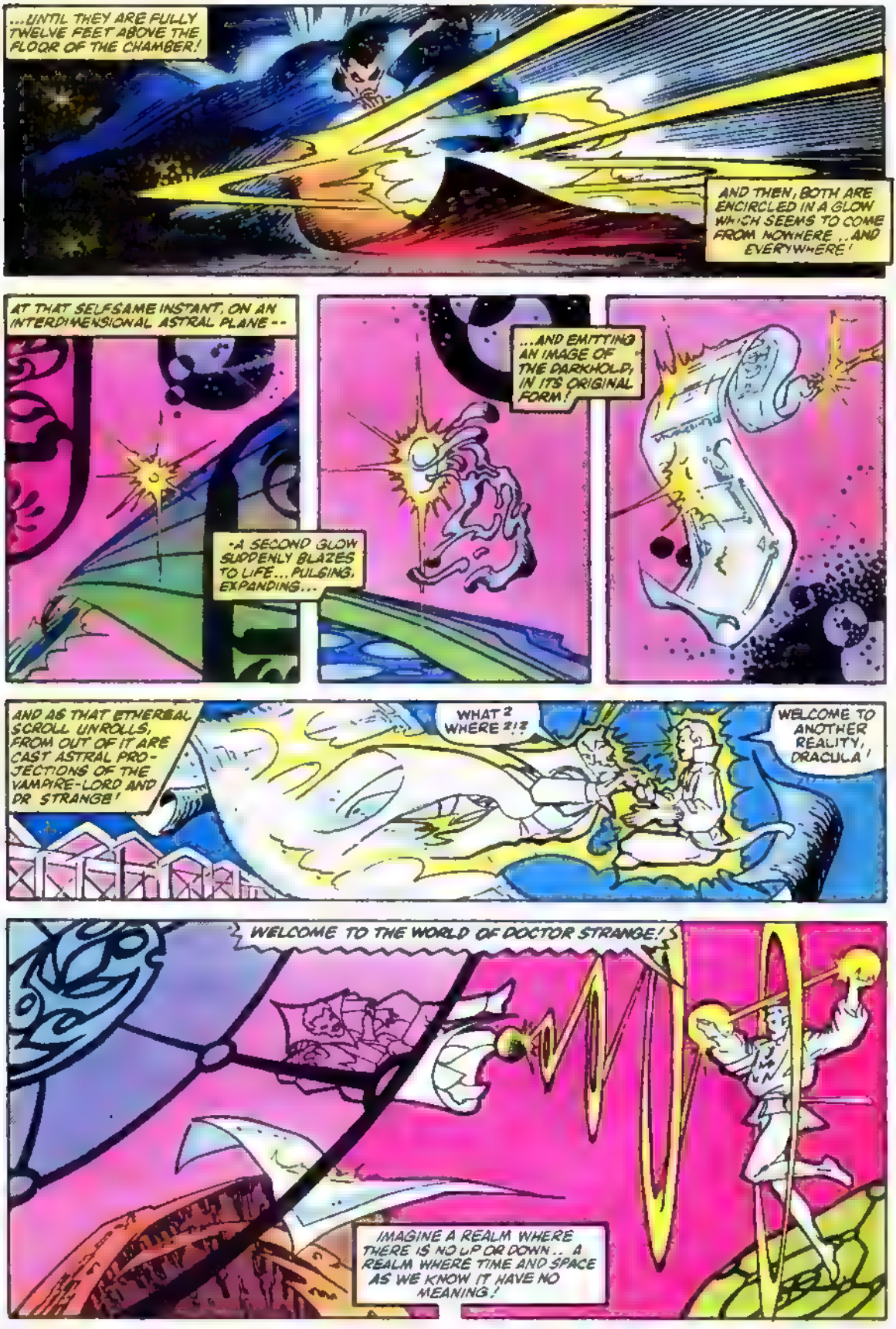
HIS AWFUL LAUGHTER ECHOING THROUGH THE HALLS, THE LORD OF THE UNLIVING STRIDES CONFIDENTLY AWAY--
--DRAWN EVER ONWARD BY THE SILENT CALL OF THE DARKHOLD.

LIKE A BLOODHOUND ON A SCENT, DRACULA SENSES THE BECKONING EVIL OF THE CURSED TOME.

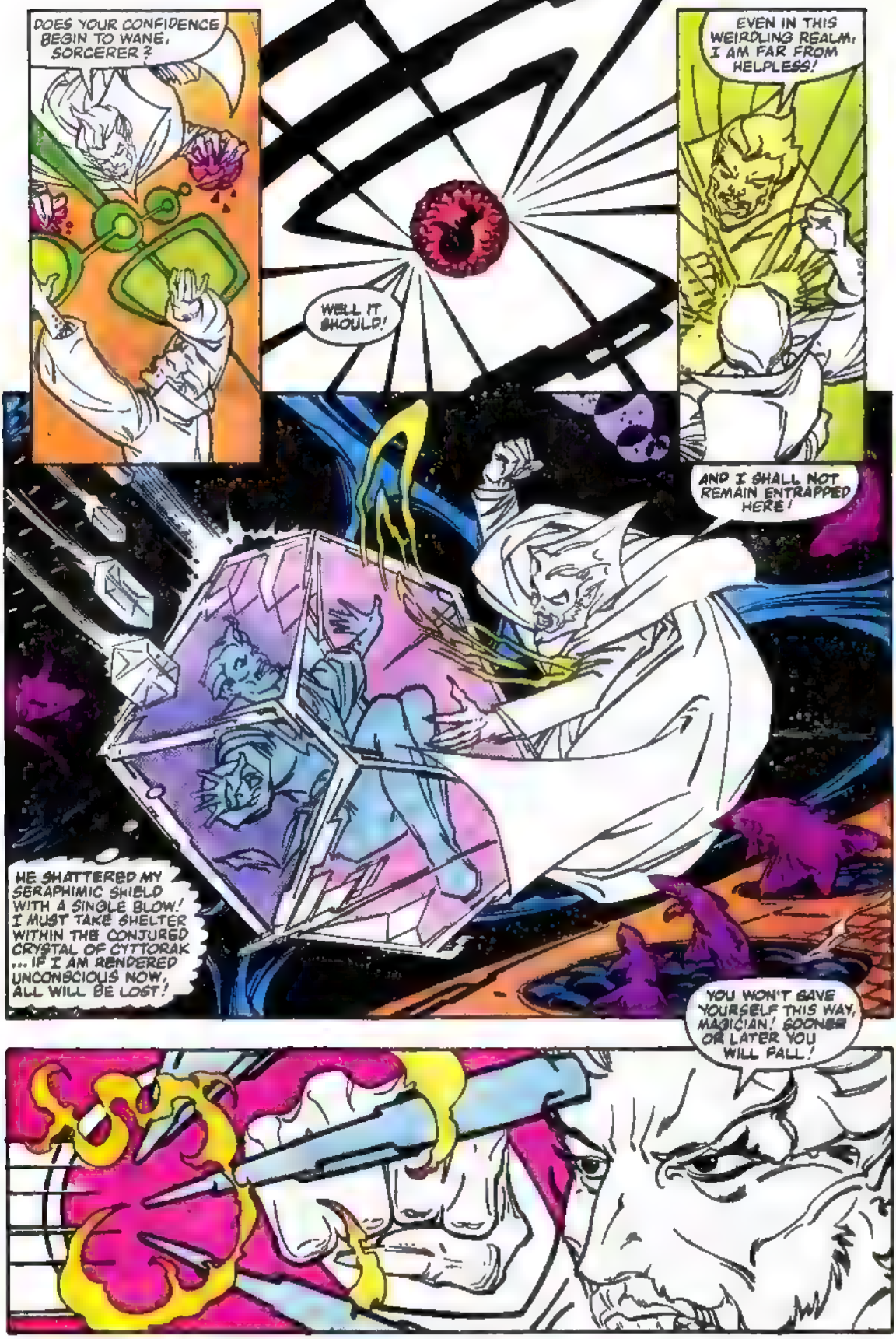
HE CANNOT RESIST. HE DOES NOT WANT TO RESIST! IF EVER THIS CREATURE POSSESSED THE TINIEST SHRED OF NOBILITY, IT HAS LONG SINCE BEEN LOST TO HIS LUST FOR POWER!
HERE... IT IS IN HERE!

THE DOOR IS OF OAK, SIX INCHES THICK, IT IS BOLTED WITH AN EIGHT-INCH-THICK BEAM, BANDED WITH IRON.
I MUST HAVE IT! I MUST HAVE THE DARKHOLD!
KER-
RAKK

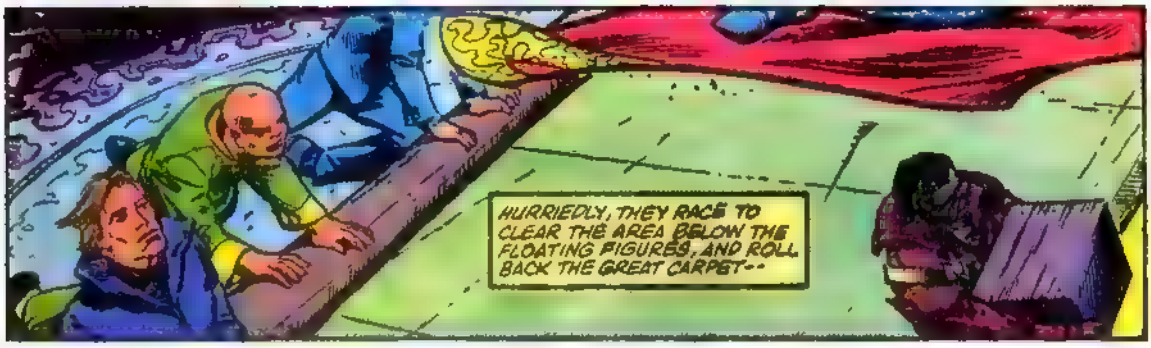
DOCTOR STRANGE! YOUR ALLIES HAVE FALLEN--AND YOU HAVE NOT THE POWER TO DENY ME THAT WHICH IS RIGHTFULLY MINE!
STRANGE?
BY ALL THE SOULS IN HADES! HE SITS ENTHRALLED BY THE POWER OF THE DARKHOLD!
TOO MUCH FOR YOU, WAS IT, SORCERER?
WELL, THEN... ALLOW ME TO TAKE IT OFF YOUR HANDS! UNLIKE YOURSELF, I HAVE NO WISH TO SUBVERT ITS UNHOLY POWER!
I... WHA--?!?
BUT, AS DRACULA LAYS HIS HANDS UPON THE DARKHOLD--
--HE IS FROZEN IN PLACE, OVERCOME BY A SPELL OF PHYSICAL CESSATION WHICH DR. STRANGE HAD PLACED UPON HIMSELF AND THE BOOK!
INSTANTLY, FROM THE FLOOR BELOW, STRANGE'S ENCHANTED CLOAK OF LEVITATION--OBEYING ANOTHER PRE-SET SPELL--SLOWLY RISES, BEARING BOTH PARALYZED FIGURES UP... UP...

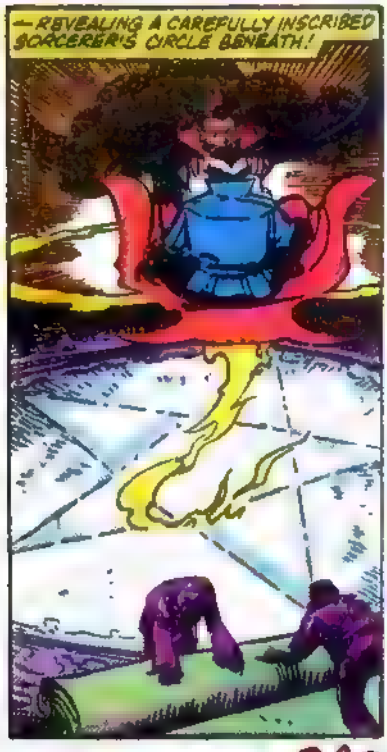

...UNTIL THEY ARE FULLY TWELVE FEET ABOVE THE FLOOR OF THE CHAMBER!
AND THEN, BOTH ARE ENCIRCLED IN A GLOW WHICH SEEMS TO COME FROM NOWHERE ..AND EVERYWHERE!
AT THAT SELFSAME INSTANT, ON AN INTERDIMENSIONAL ASTRAL PLANE --
A SECOND GLOW SUDDENLY BLAZES TO LIFE... PULSING, EXPANDING...
...AND EMITTING AN IMAGE OF THE DARKHOLD, IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM!
AND AS THAT ETHEREAL SCROLL UNROLLS, FROM OUT OF IT ARE CAST ASTRAL PROJECTIONS OF THE VAMPIRE-LORD AND DR STRANGE!
WHAT? WHERE?!?
WELCOME TO ANOTHER REALITY, DRACULA!
WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF DOCTOR STRANGE!
IMAGINE A REALM WHERE THERE IS NO UP OR DOWN.. A REALM WHERE TIME AND SPACE AS WE KNOW IT HAVE NO MEANING!

THRUST INTO JUST SUCH A DISORIENTING PLACE, AND BESET BY THE MASTER MYSTIC'S BOLTS OF BEDEVILMENT, DRACULA'S ASTRAL FORM DESPERATELY LASHES OUT, AND. .
EH? THESE NUMBING RAYS... THEY CAN BE BROKEN!
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT YOUR MAGICKS ARE OVERRATED, DOCTOR!
BY THE VISHANTI! I MUST PUT HIM BACK ON THE DEFENSIVE!
BY THE MIGHTY HANDS OF OSHTUR AND THE BANDS OF CYTTORAK, GRANT ME NOW THE POWER AND FURY TO FORCE MY FOEMAN BACK!
NO GOOD! ALREADY HE IS RECOVERING FROM MY ATTACK! THE ENERGIES WHICH INCREASED HIS PHYSICAL STRENGTH, HAVE EMPOWERED HIS ASTRAL FORM AS WELL!


DOES YOUR CONFIDENCE BEGIN TO WANE, SORCERER?
WELL IT SHOULD!
EVEN IN THIS WEIRDLING REALM, I AM FAR FROM HELPLESS!
AND I SHALL NOT REMAIN ENTRAPPED HERE!
HE SHATTERED MY SERAPHIMIC SHIELD WITH A SINGLE BLOW! I MUST TAKE SHELTER WITHIN THE CONJURED CRYSTAL OF CYTTORAK ... IF I AM RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS NOW, ALL WILL BE LOST!
YOU WON'T SAVE YOURSELF THIS WAY, MAGICIAN! SOONER OR LATER YOU WILL FALL!

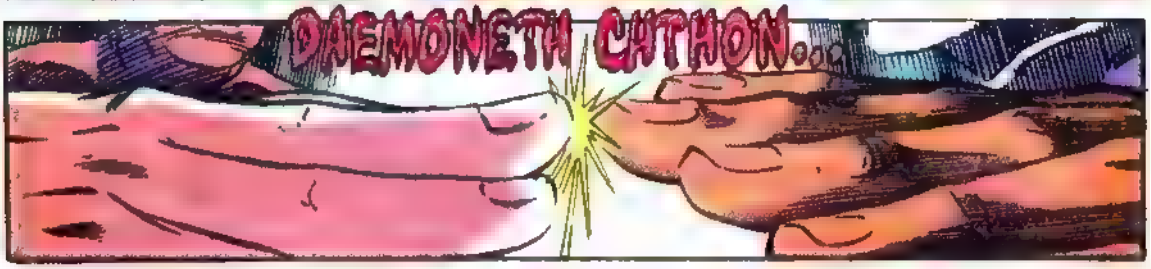
MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD...
LOOKS LIKE DOC GOT OL' "SMILES" ON ICE... LIKE HE'D PLANNED!
YEAH. IT'S UP TO US TO DO THE REST. HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE!

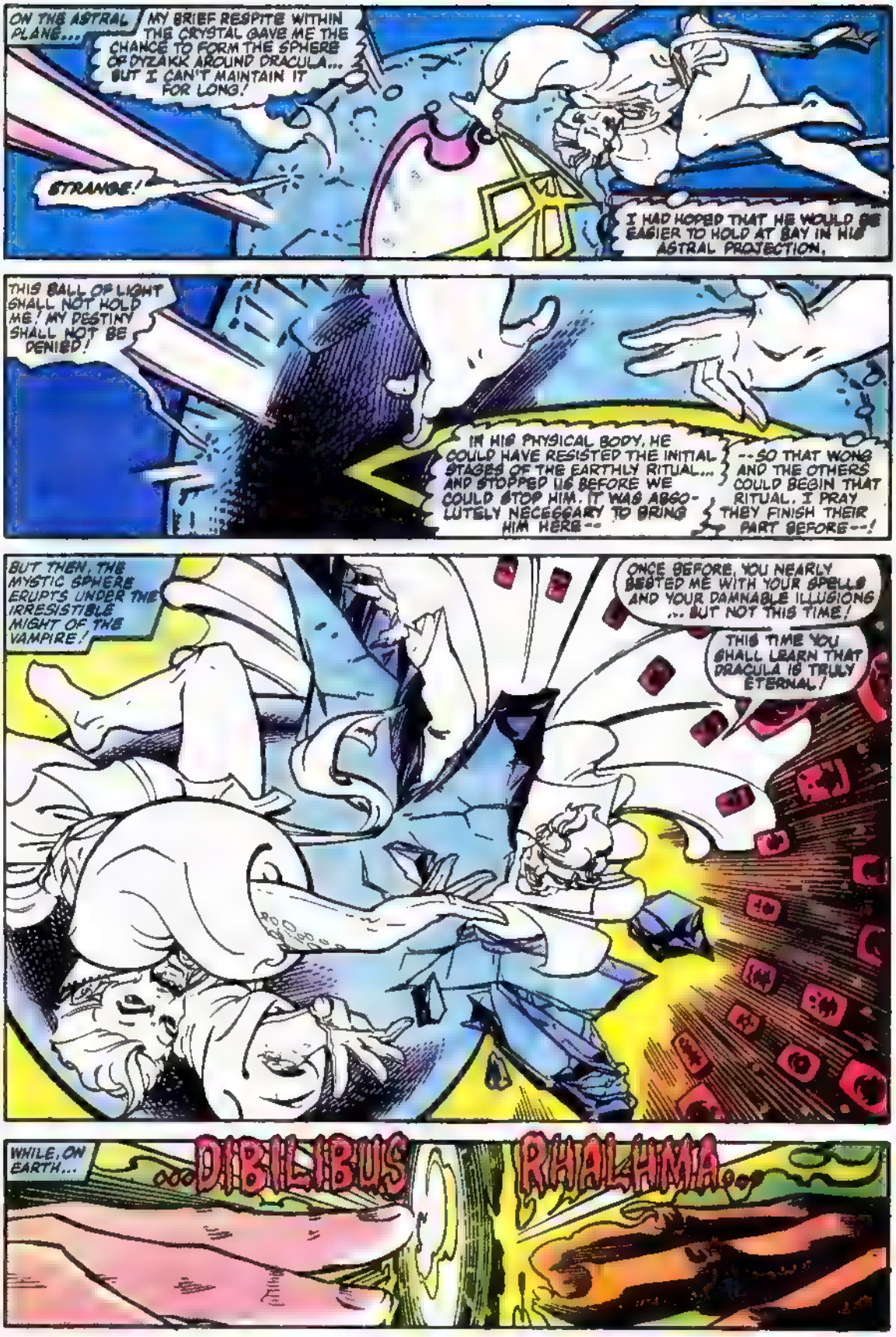

HURRIEDLY, THEY RACE TO CLEAR THE AREA BELOW THE FLOATING FIGURES, AND ROLL BACK THE GREAT CARPET--

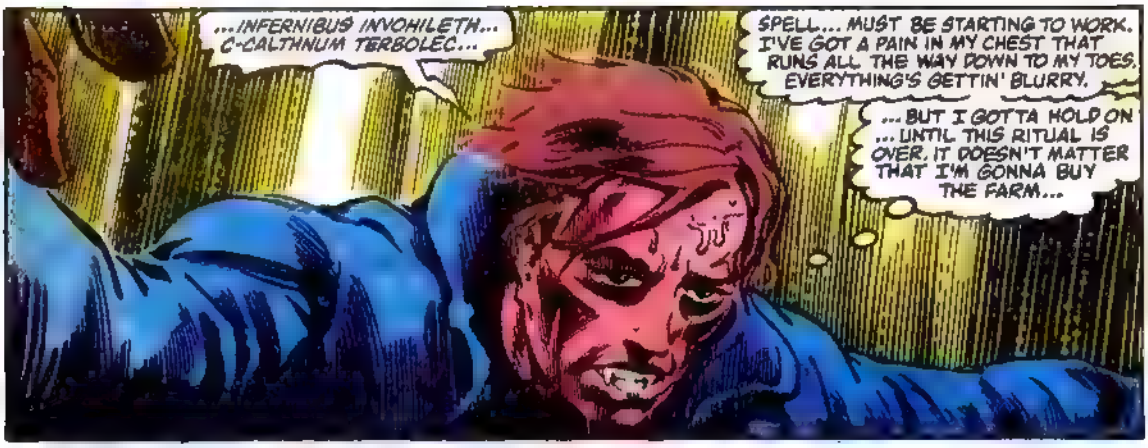

--REVEALING A CAREFULLY INSCRIBED SORCERER'S CIRCLE BENEATH!

AT ONCE, ARCANE ENERGIES BLAZE BETWEEN THE CIRCLE AND THE FIGURES OVERHEAD, FORMING A MYSTIC CIRCUIT.

NOW, WHILE THE MASTER HOLDS OUR FOE BEYOND THIS WORLD, WE MUST BEGIN THE DARK RITUAL TO ERASE THE CURSE OF VAMPIRISM!
REACH YOU 'ROUND THE CIRCLE, TOUCHING HANDS, AND REPEAT AFTER ME...


DAEMONETH CHTHON...


ON THE ASTRAL PLANE...
MY BRIEF RESPITE WITHIN THE CRYSTAL GAVE ME THE CHANCE TO FORM THE SPHERE OF DYZAKK AROUND DRACULA... BUT I CAN'T MAINTAIN IT FOR LONG!
STRANGE!
I HAD HOPED THAT HE WOULD BE EASIER TO HOLD AT BAY IN HIS ASTRAL PROJECTION.
THIS BALL OF LIGHT SHALL NOT HOLD ME! MY DESTINY SHALL NOT BE DENIED!
IN HIS PHYSICAL BODY, HE COULD HAVE RESISTED THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE EARTHLY RITUAL... AND STOPPED US BEFORE WE COULD STOP HIM. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO BRING HIM HERE--
--SO THAT WONG AND THE OTHERS COULD BEGIN THAT RITUAL. I PRAY THEY FINISH THEIR PART BEFORE--!
BUT THEN, THE MYSTIC SPHERE ERUPTS UNDER THE IRRESISTIBLE MIGHT OF THE VAMPIRE!
ONCE BEFORE, YOU NEARLY BESTED ME WITH YOUR SPELLS AND YOUR DAMNABLE ILLUSIONS ... BUT NOT THIS TIME!
THIS TIME YOU SHALL LEARN THAT DRACULA IS TRULY ETERNAL!
WHILE, ON EARTH...
DIBILIBUS
RHALHMA


...INFERNIBUS INVOHILETH... C-CALTHNUM TERBOLEC...
SPELL... MUST BE STARTING TO WORK. I'VE GOT A PAIN IN MY CHEST THAT RUNS ALL THE WAY DOWN TO MY TOES. EVERYTHING'S GETTIN' BLURRY.
...BUT I GOTTA HOLD ON ...UNTIL THIS RITUAL IS OVER. IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT I'M GONNA BUY THE FARM...

"...AS LONG AS I CAN MAKE SURE THAT DRACULA AND ALL THE REST OF THE WORLD'S BLOOD-SUCKERS GO WITH ME!"
NOW, STRANGE, YOU WILL SHOW ME HOW TO REGAIN MY BODY AND MY WORLD, OR I SHALL--!
ARRSH! WHAT... WHAT IS HAPPENING TO M-ME? THE PAIN--!

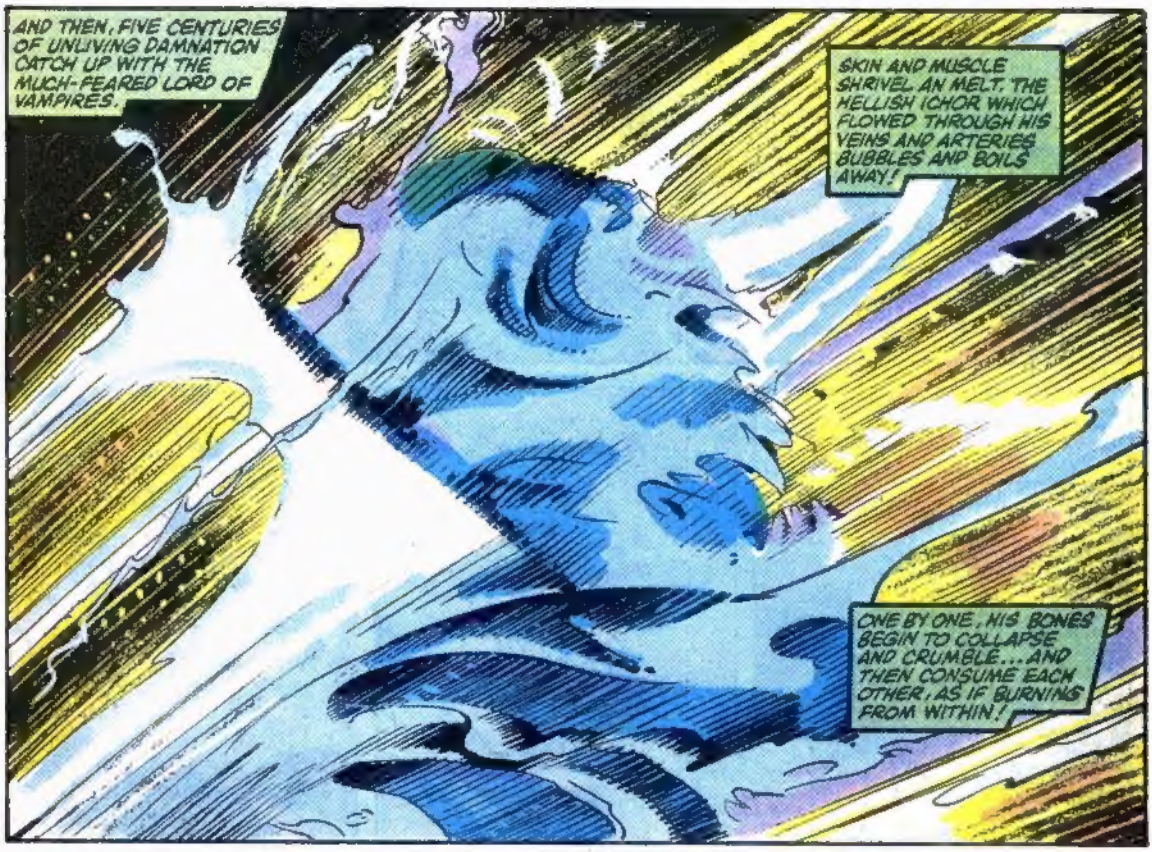
YOU... YOU ARE SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!
ONLY INDIRECTLY, MONSTER! OTHERS ARE USING THE SPELLS I UNCOVERED, 'TIS TRUE--

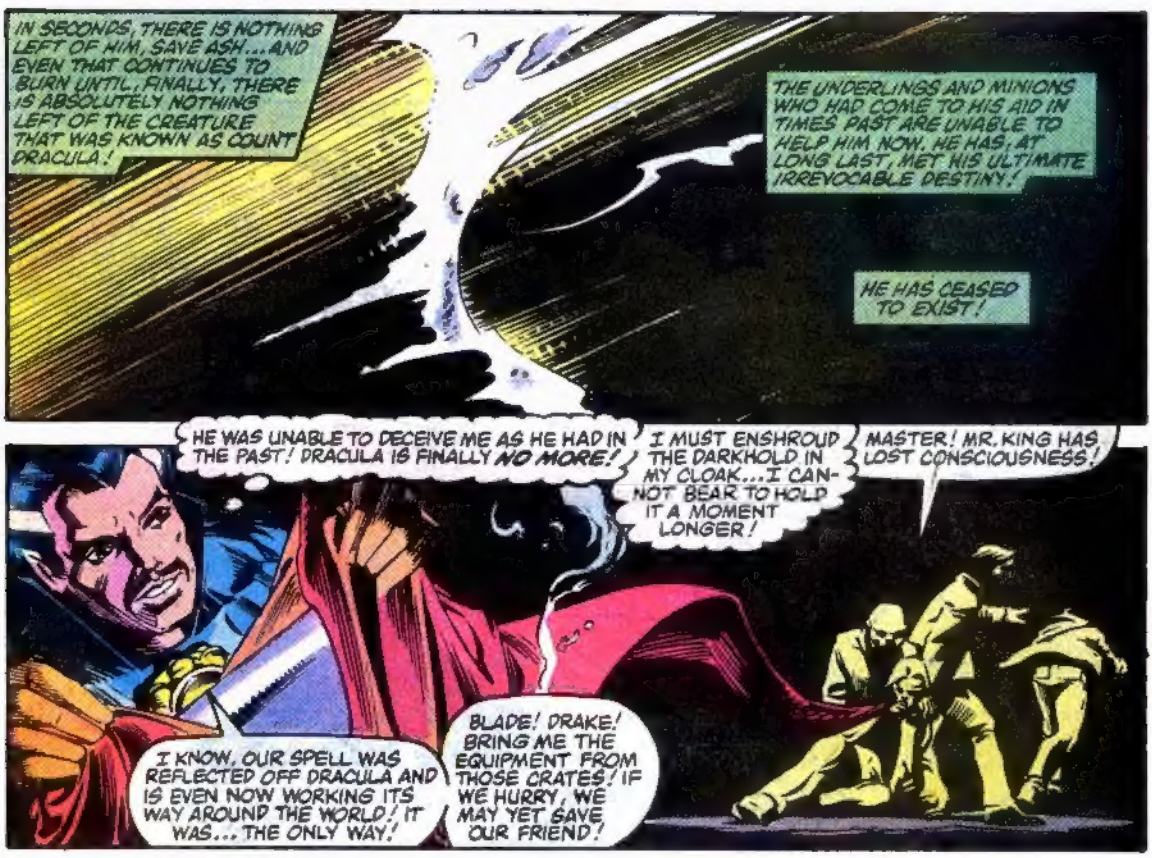
--BUT YOU, THROUGH YOUR QUEST FOR THE DARKHOLD, HAVE SOWN THE SEEDS OF YOUR OWN DEFEAT! THOUGH THAT BOOK OF SINS MIGHT HAVE GRANTED YOU ABSOLUTE POWER--

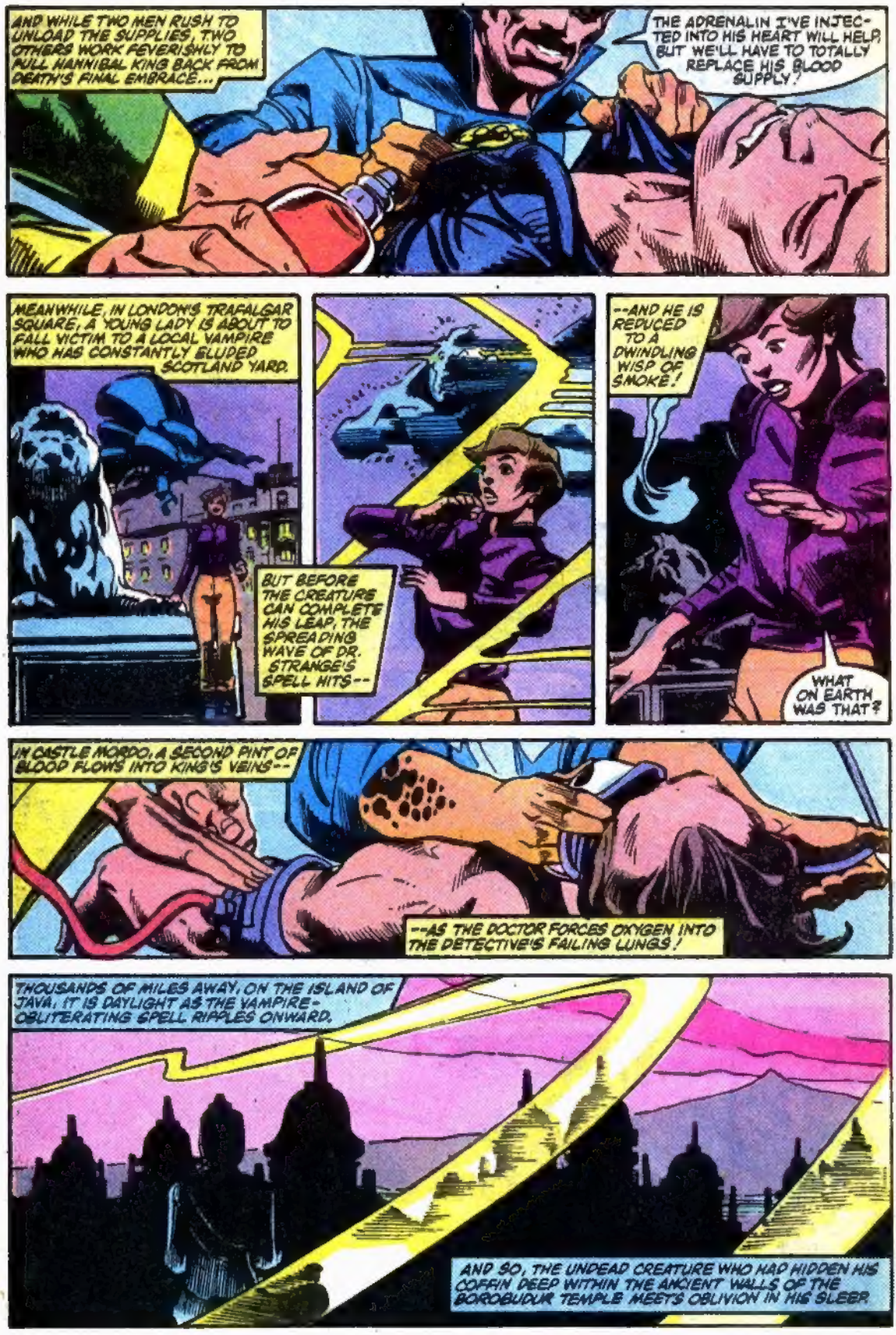
--IT ALSO SHOWED US THE MEANS BY WHICH TO END YOUR CURSE FOREVER! 'TWERE THE SPELLS OF THE DARKHOLD WHICH FIRST CREATED VAMPIRES--
--AND WHAT THE DARKHOLD CREATES, SO CAN IT UTTERLY DESTROY!

BY THE THREE WHO ARE VISHANTI, BY THE POWER OVER ALL, STRIKE YE DOWN THIS THING INFERNAL! LEAD HIM TO HIS FINAL FALL!
AT LAST! THE COMBINATION OF THE EARTHLY RITUALS AND MY MAGIC HAS WEAKENED HIM ENOUGH FOR THE FINAL INCANTATION TO DO ITS WORK.
BUT FOR THAT INCANTATION TO BE EFFECTIVE, I MUST RETURN US TO THE PHYSICAL PLANE-- AT ONCE!
IN A FINAL BURST OF LIGHT, THE ETHEREAL SCROLL VANISHES.
AND ON EARTH, TWO ASTRAL FORMS ARE SUDDENLY THRUST BACK INTO THEIR BODIES!
ONLY ONE OF THE TWO IS PREPARED!
YEEARRGH!
THE VAMPIRE-LORD TUMBLES TO THE FLOOR BELOW--
--LANDING IN THE VERY MIDST OF THE SORCERER'S CIRCLE!

YOU HAVE SOUGHT YOUR DESTINY, MONSTER, AND NOW YOU SHALL FIND IT! NO LONGER SHALL YOU OR YOUR KIND BEFOUL THE EARTH!
YOU... CANNOT USE THE DARK-HOLD AGAINST ME, STRANGE! THE BOOK WILL POSSESS ANY WHO TRY TO USE IT FOR THE GOOD!
THAT IS TRUE... FOR ANY WHO WOULD USE IT IN AN UNSUSPECTING WAY! EVEN FOR AS PRACTICED A SORCERER AS MYSELF, THERE IS DANGER!
BUT IN THIS CASE, IT IS A DANGER WORTH TAKING!
NOSMO COBIS... HOLO ERASMA RABIS...
THE WORDS SOUND VAGUELY LATIN-- BUT, IN TRUTH, THE LANGUAGE PREDATES MANKIND BY MILENNIA!
...KATERAMA LUCEM...
NO! NO!!
FRAGMENTS OF THIS INCANTATION WERE DISCOVERED YEARS AGO BY AN AGED MONK NAMED MONTESSI. UTTERED WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF A VAMPIRE, EVEN BY ONE UNSCHOOLED IN THE MYSTIC ARTS, IT WOULD CAUSE THE UNLIVING CREATURE'S TOTAL OBLITERATION.
BUT DOCTOR STRANGE IS EARTH'S SORCERER SUPREME... AND HE HAS THE COMPLETE INCANTATION! HE SHALL NOT SUFFER A VAMPIRE TO LIVE!
EVEN AS DRACULA WRITHES UNDER THE FORCE OF THE SPELL, WAVES OF UNSEEN MAGICAL ENERGY RIPPLE AWAY FROM HIM AND OUT OF THE CHAMBER!


AND THEN, FIVE CENTURIES OF UNLIVING DAMNATION CATCH UP WITH THE MUCH-FEARED LORD OF VAMPIRES.
SKIN AND MUSCLE SHRIVEL AN MELT. THE HELLISH ICHOR WHICH FLOWED THROUGH HIS VEINS AND ARTERIES BUBBLES AND BOILS AWAY!
ONE BY ONE, HIS BONES BEGIN TO COLLAPSE AND CRUMBLE... AND THEN CONSUME EACH OTHER, AS IF BURNING FROM WITHIN!


IN SECONDS, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT OF HIM, SAVE ASH... AND EVEN THAT CONTINUES TO BURN UNTIL, FINALLY, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING LEFT OF THE CREATURE THAT WAS KNOWN AS COUNT DRACULA!
THE UNDERLINGS AND MINIONS WHO HAD COME TO HIS AID IN TIMES PAST ARE UNABLE TO HELP HIM NOW. HE HAS, AT LONG LAST, MET HIS ULTIMATE IRREVOCABLE DESTINY!
HE HAS CEASED TO EXIST!
HE WAS UNABLE TO DECEIVE ME AS HE HAD IN THE PAST! DRACULA IS FINALLY NO MORE!
I MUST ENSHROUD THE DARKHOLD IN MY CLOAK... I CANNOT BEAR TO HOLD IT A MOMENT LONGER!
MASTER! MR. KING HAS LOST CONSCIOUSNESS!
I KNOW. OUR SPELL WAS REFLECTED OFF DRACULA AND IS EVEN NOW WORKING ITS WAY AROUND THE WORLD! IT WAS... THE ONLY WAY!
BLADE! DRAKE! BRING ME THE EQUIPMENT FROM THOSE CRATES! IF WE HURRY, WE MAY YET SAVE OUR FRIEND!

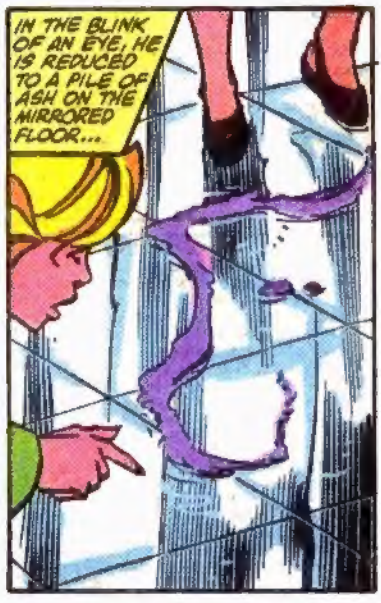

AND WHILE TWO MEN RUSH TO UNLOAD THE SUPPLIES, TWO OTHERS WORK FEVERISHLY TO PULL HANNIBAL KING BACK FROM DEATH'S FINAL EMBRACE...
THE ADRENALIN I'VE INJECTED INTO HIS HEART WILL HELP, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO TOTALLY REPLACE HIS BLOOD SUPPLY!
MEANWHILE, IN LONDON'S TRAFALGAR SQUARE, A YOUNG LADY IS ABOUT TO FALL VICTIM TO A LOCAL VAMPIRE WHO HAS CONSTANTLY ELUDED SCOTLAND YARD.
BUT BEFORE THE CREATURE CAN COMPLETE HIS LEAP, THE SPREADING WAVE OF DR. STRANGE'S SPELL HITS--
--AND HE IS REDUCED TO A DWINDLING WISP OF SMOKE!
WHAT ON EARTH WAS THAT?
IN CASTLE MORDO, A SECOND PINT OF BLOOD FLOWS INTO KING'S VEINS--
--AS THE DOCTOR FORCES OXYGEN INTO THE DETECTIVE'S FAILING LUNGS!
THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY, ON THE ISLAND OF JAVA, IT IS DAYLIGHT AS THE VAMPIRE-OBLITERATING SPELL RIPPLES ONWARD.
AND SO, THE UNDEAD CREATURE WHO HAD HIDDEN HIS COFFIN DEEP WITHIN THE ANCIENT WALLS OF THE BOROBUDUR TEMPLE MEETS OBLIVION IN HIS SLEEP.

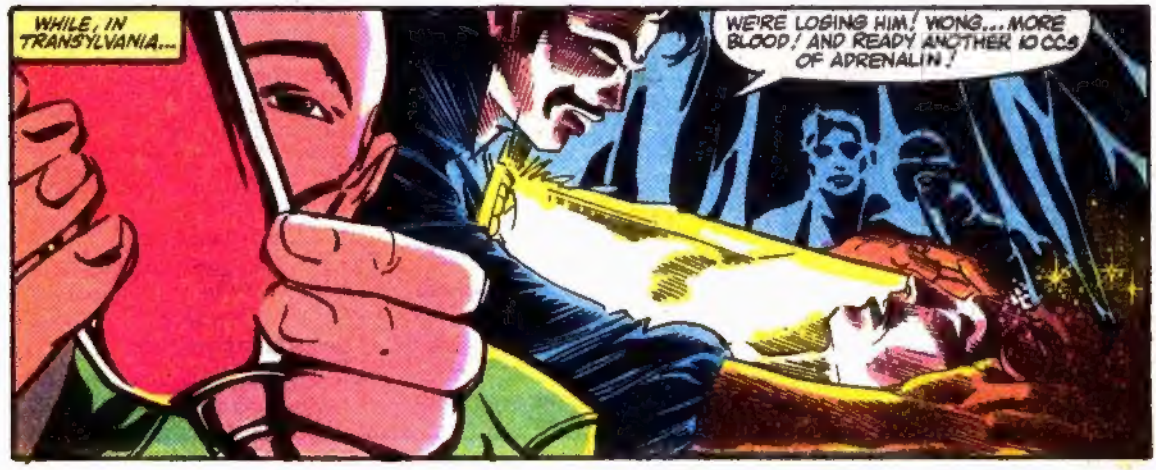
STILL THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE CONTINUES. DRAKE AND BLADE SET UP A SPECIAL HYPERBARIC TENT TO KEEP KING'S TISSUES SUPER-SATURATED WITH OXYGEN AS STRANGE AND WONG CONTINUE THEIR WORK.
HE DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.
COME ON, KING! COME ON!

ON MELROSE AVENUE IN LOS ANGELES, ANOTHER CREATURE WHO ONLY COMES OUT AT NIGHT SAUNTERS INTO HIS FAVORITE CLUB.
FOR YEARS, HE WAS JUST ANOTHER HACK WRITER, SCRIBBLING FANTASIES ABOUT VAMPIRES. THEN HE WAS ACTUALLY BITTEN BY ONE, AND HIS "LIFE" CHANGED.

NOW, WITH TWO HIT SITCOMS UNDER HIS BELT, AND A MOVIE DEAL IN THE WORKS, HIS NAME IS ON EVERYONE'S LIPS...
HAROLD!
HAROLD!
HAROLD!
HEY, PEOPLE! LET'S PARTY!

BUT THEN...
HUH?


IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, HE IS REDUCED TO A PILE OF ASH ON THE MIRRORED FLOOR...


WHILE, IN TRANSYLVANIA...
WE'RE LOSING HIM! WONG... MORE BLOOD! AND READY ANOTHER 10 CCs OF ADRENALIN!

IN A RENTED VILLA IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, A YOUNG WOMAN PAUSES IN HER NOCTURNAL MEDITATIONS... HER EAR COCKED TO THE WINDS, AS IF HEARING A SIREN CALL.
THEN SHE, TOO, FEELS THE SPELL WASH OVER HER. INSTINCTIVELY, SHE SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED, AND SHE SMILES.
THUS DOES LILITH, DAUGHTER OF DRACULA, GO TO HER FINAL PEACE -- SECURE IN THE FEELING THAT HER HATED FATHER IS NO MORE!

FINALLY, HOURS LATER...
HANNIBAL? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
SAY SOMETHING, MAN!
I... FEEL AWFUL!
YEAH? FOR A GUY WHO DIED 'BOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, YOU LOOK PRETTY GOOD!

WELCOME BACK TO THE LIVING, HANNIBAL.
I-I'M ALIVE? YOU SAVED ME?
YOU SAVED YOURSELF ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, WHEN YOU VOWED NOT TO KILL FOR BLOOD. THAT SET YOU APART FROM EVERY OTHER VAMPIRE ON EARTH. YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE MY SKILLS COULD HELP!
I'M REALLY HUMAN AGAIN! I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT... BUT, YEAH, THE OL' FANGS ARE GONE! OW! AND MY ACHES AND PAINS HAVEN'T FELT THIS BAD IN YEARS -- I MUST BE HUMAN!
HEY, HELP ME OVER TO A WINDOW! THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN WAITING TO SEE FOR A LONG TIME!

NODDING, THEY LEAD HIM OUT ONTO A BALCONY--AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, HANNIBAL KING WELCOMES A NEW DAWN...